



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Grand Teton
National Park

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Grand Teton National Park News Release

Park Highway Temporarily Closed Due to Truck Accident and Diesel Spill

Grand Teton National Park temporarily closed Highway 26/89/191 north of Snake River Overlook on Tuesday evening, February 7, while park staff cleaned a diesel spill from the roadway after a Macy's water truck jackknifed and ruptured a fuel tank. Park employees, who are trained for hazardous materials (HazMat) response, worked quickly to remove the petroleum spill and reopen the highway for traffic after the truck was towed to Jackson.

Teton Interagency Dispatch Center received a call at 4:35 on Tuesday afternoon from a Bridger-Teton forest service employee who came upon the accident scene shortly after it happened. The Macy's tanker truck had delivered potable water to Togwotee Mountain Lodge and was returning to Jackson when the truck slid on ice and jackknifed just north of the Snake River Overlook; the truck became stuck in a snow bank on the northbound lane and was blocking traffic. The forest service employee confirmed that while no one was injured in the accident, some diesel fuel was leaking from a rupture fuel tank.

Park rangers immediately responded to direct traffic around the accident scene and to assess the situation. Due to the fuel leakage, an interdisciplinary team of park employees, who function as the park's HazMat team, were called out to contain and remove the petroleum spill from the highway.

The highway was temporarily closed to all traffic from 6:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. during the removal of the Macy's truck and further clean-up by the park's HazMat team. Most of the diesel leakage was captured in containers before reaching the ground. However, some of the spill soaked into the snowpack on the road surface and had to be shoveled into 60-gallon bags to be later trucked out of the park and disposed of at a certified HazMat facility. After all park vehicles cleared the area, the highway was thoroughly sanded as a safety precaution. The response and clean-up operation lasted nearly four hours, ending about 8:30 p.m.

Grand Teton personnel participate in annual training and refresher courses to maintain the skills required to carry out hazardous materials clean-up operations. The park also maintains two HazMat trailers that are stocked with response and clean-up equipment.

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